

demeanor reflected the burdens of his lonely journey as the leader of a “blundering and sinful” people.

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, to Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, two uneducated farmers, in a one-room log cabin on the 348-acre Sinking Spring Farm, in southeast Hardin County, Kentucky. Lincoln began his political career in 1832, at age 23, with an unsuccessful campaign for the Illinois General Assembly, as a member of the Whig Party.

Lincoln was a true opponent of injustice. In 1837, he made his first protest against slavery in the Illinois House, stating that the institution was “founded on both injustice and bad policy.”

Opposed to the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, Lincoln spoke to a crowd in Peoria, Illinois, on October 16, 1854, outlining the moral, political and economic arguments against slavery that he would continue to uphold throughout his career.

His “Western” origins also appealed to the newer states: other contenders, especially those with more governmental experience, had acquired enemies within the party and were weak in the critical western states, while Lincoln was perceived as a moderate who could win the West.

On November 6, 1860, Lincoln was elected as the 16th President of the United States. In his First Inaugural Address, Lincoln declared, “I hold that in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments,” arguing further that the purpose of the United States Constitution was “to form a more perfect union.”

Lincoln possessed a keen understanding of strategic points and understood the importance of defeating the enemy’s army, rather than simply capturing cities. He had, however, limited success in motivating his commanders to adopt his strategies until late 1863, when he found a man who shared his vision of the war in Ulysses S. Grant. Only then could he insist on using African American troops and relentlessly pursue a series of coordinated offensives in multiple theaters.

Throughout the war, Lincoln showed a keen curiosity with the military campaigns. He spent hours at the War Department telegraph office, reading dispatches from his generals. He visited battle sites frequently, and seemed fascinated by scenes of war.

The Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in territories not already under Union control. Lincoln later said: “I never, in my life, felt more certain that I was doing right, than I do in signing this paper.”

As the war was drawing to a close, Lincoln became the first American president to be assassinated. On April 14, 1865, as a lone bodyguard wandered, and Lincoln sat in his state box, John Wilkes Booth crept up behind the President and fired a single fatal shot into the President. However, his triumphs live on far past this date.

In 1982, forty-nine historians and political scientists were asked by the Chicago Tribune to rate all the Presidents through Jimmy Carter in five categories: leadership qualities, accomplishments/crisis management, political skills, appointments, and character/integrity. At the top of the list stood Abraham Lincoln. The judgment of historians and the public tells us that Abraham Lincoln was the nation’s greatest President by every measure applied.

Because he was committed to preserving the Union and thus vindicating democracy no matter what the consequences to himself, the Union was indeed saved. Because he understood that ending slavery required patience, careful timing, shrewd calculations, and an iron resolve, slavery was indeed killed. Lincoln managed in the process of saving the Union and killing slavery to define the creation of a more perfect Union in terms of liberty and economic equality that rallied the citizenry behind him. Because he understood that victory in both great causes depended upon purposeful and visionary presidential leadership as well as the exercise of politically acceptable means, he left as his legacy a United States that was both whole and free. His great achievement, historians tell us, was his ability to energize and mobilize the nation by appealing to its best ideals while acting “with malice towards none” in the pursuit of a more perfect, more just, and more enduring Union.

Mr. Speaker, President Lincoln has paved the way for people of color such as me to serve in Congress and represent the people of the 18th District of Texas proudly. He has been a trailblazer, opening the door for our first African American President, President Barack Obama.

This year, we celebrate the life of President Abraham Lincoln. He has given America many victories. Importantly, his presidency opened the door to ensure that all Americans would be assured their constitutional freedoms and that all Americans would enjoy the triumph against oppression and injustice. President Lincoln has lit the candle, let us today continue to carry it and make sure that it will never go out.

One hundred and forty six years after the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln’s words continue to inspire people and governments not only in America, but throughout the world. In 1958, France adopted the constitution of its’ fifth—and current—republic. Under Title 1, Section 2, the constitution states that “the principle of the Republic shall be: government of the people, by the people and for the people.” This is one of many examples of other nations viewing our great country as a beacon of democracy.

I thank my colleague, Rep. TODD PLATTS, of Pennsylvania, for introducing this important legislation, to ensure that we celebrate, treasure and recognize the impact of President Abraham Lincoln’s most famous speech and I urge my colleagues to honor President Lincoln not only by joining me in supporting this resolution, but also by promoting the reading and examining of this speech on November 19th.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 736.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the

Chair’s prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o’clock and 58 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HEINRICH) at 6 o’clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 1168, by the yeas and nays;

House Resolution 291, by the yeas and nays;

Senate 509, by the yeas and nays.

Proceedings on remaining postponed questions will resume later in the week.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

VETERANS RETRAINING ACT OF 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1168, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1168, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 356, nays 0, not voting 76, as follows:

[Roll No. 832]

YEAS—356

Aderholt	Baca	Bean
Adler (NJ)	Bachmann	Berkley
Akin	Bachus	Berman
Alexander	Baird	Berry
Altmire	Baldwin	Biggert
Andrews	Barrow	Bilbray
Arcuri	Bartlett	Bilirakis
Austria	Barton (TX)	Bishop (GA)